Power, Control, Restraint
The Category A prisoner in the Dispersal Prison System
This thesis presents the experiences endured and knowledge acquired during 14 years as a Category A prisoner in high security dispersal prisons. From that perspective the restrictive rules, regulations and regimes that impact on the lives of an academically overlooked cohort of prisoners 'whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or the police or to the security of the State' are subjected to critical appraisal. I have focused on the minutiae of institutional arrangements to illuminate an unmediated and unrecorded exposition of prison life for a category A prisoner.

The origins of dispersal prisons and security classifications are outlined to provide context to the central theme of what it means to be labelled as category A. An essential prerequisite for the continued existence of dispersal prisons is that there must always be a sufficiency of prisoners deemed worthy of category A status. Currently, less than 25% of the population in dispersal prisons is category A. I contend that the category A system is now redundant: the pool of criminality from which category A prisoners are so designated has shrunk. Armed robbers, once the mainstay of the system, are no longer extant and an organised IRA has been replaced by Islamic terrorists, the most dangerous of whom are isolated in anti-radicalisation units. Thus the typical Category A prisoner has, by and large, disappeared but sadly the system remains The dispersal system is an obsolete, highly expensive anachronism with the original concept of 'a liberal regime within a secure perimeter' barely a memory. In their current form dispersal prisons are cruel and oppressive and serve no meaningful purpose. Category A categorisation is flawed, obsolete and nonsensical. The effects of supply and demand have perverted the system and decision making on Category A status is unintelligent, ineffective and needlessly cruel. Finally, the use and abuse of a virtually unrestrained power to segregate those prisoners deemed to be troublesome and dangerous is placed in context and the current procedure is analysed.

Simon Price
28 December 2018
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1. **ACCT**: Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork  
2. **BOSS**: Body Orifice Security Scanner  
3. **CBT**: Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy  
4. **CM**: Custodial Manager  
5. **CNA**: Certified Normal Accommodation  
6. **DIRF**: Discrimination Incident Report Form  
7. **DSPD**: Dangerous Severe Personality Disorder  
8. **FOIA**: Freedom of Information Act  
9. **GBT**: Gay, Bisexual and Transgender  
10. **HMIP**: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons HMP  
11. **HMP**: Her Majesty’s Prison  
12. **HMPPS**: Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service  
13. **IDTS**: Integrated Drug Treatment System  
14. **IEP**: Incentives and Earned Privileges  
15. **IPP**: Imprisonment for Public Protection  
16. **IR**: Information Report  
17. **LTHSPG**: Long Term and High Security Prisons Group  
18. **MAPPA**: Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements  
19. **MQPL**: Measuring the Quality of Prison Life  
20. **NOMS**: National Offender Management Service  
21. **NRC**: National Research Committee  
22. **OAO**: On the Application of  
23. **OASys**: Offender Assessment System  
24. **PIPE**: Psychologically Informed Planned Environment  
25. **PPE**: Personal Protection Equipment  
26. **SOTP**: Sex Offenders Treatment Programme  
27. **SSJ**: Secretary of State for Justice  
28. **TSP**: Thinking Skills Programme  
29. **ViSOR**: Violent Sex Offenders Register  
30. **VP**: Vulnerable Prisoner
Foreword

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted or any other academic award.

Signed

Simon Price

Dated 25 December 2018

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